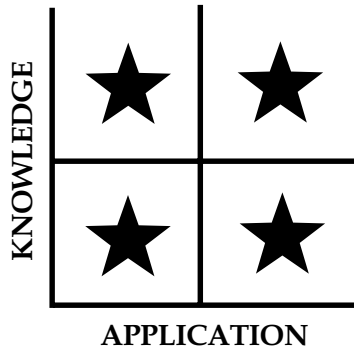


Note-taking/ Graphic Organizers

Description



During instruction, students view a variety of media that instructors use to enhance their lessons. These include: chalkboards, overhead projectors, flip charts, poster displays, bulletin boards, and PowerPoint presentations. All of these visuals assist students in comprehending what is being taught. An equally important medium for reinforcing learning is created by the learners themselves – notes. Note-taking is a very common activity; however, students usually have little instruction in effective note-taking and its role in learning. For a variety of reasons, note-taking needs to be encouraged. Since it is a skill, it also needs to be practiced. Good note-taking can be learned.

Purposes of Note-taking

Research indicates that note-taking has a positive effect upon learning. Studies find that note-taking helps students to focus, promotes a more thorough understanding of ideas, and encourages drawing relationships and organizing materials. Students who take notes retain more than those who do not. For the learner, note-taking:

"One picture is worth more than a thousand words."

- Chinese Proverb -

- helps maintain attention
- fosters interest in the topic
- organizes the instruction
- requires active participation
- involves condensing and rephrasing, which enhances comprehension
- aids in remembering the material taught
- provides a written record for reference and review
- gives evidence of active involvement in the lecture
- provides opportunities for reorganizing the material.

Value of Note-taking

When it comes to reviewing notes, the quality of the notes has an effect on the benefit. Reviewing "good" notes is better than reviewing "poor" notes. It is important, therefore, that students receive instruction in effective note-taking. It is also more beneficial for students to review

their own notes than to use a friend's notes. Reviewing another's notes negates some of the benefit of the review.

In general, the research indicates the following about students and note-taking.

- Students who take detailed notes do better than those who take sketchy ones.
- Students with good memory skills do even better when they take notes.
- Students who are trained in note-taking skills create more useful notes.
- Students make more errors in their note-taking when they summarize information from poorly designed audiovisual aids.
- Students who know what will be assessed on the lecture material take fewer notes than when they are unsure of what or when they will be assessed.
- Students are more likely to record key points when they are written on a flip chart or chalkboard or contained in a PowerPoint presentation.

Presenters/instructors influence note-taking. What the presenter emphasizes is usually what the student will summarize in notes.

A graphic organizer functions like the graphics in a textbook; it enables the student to form a visual picture of information that depicts patterns and relationships. This visual representation of ideas and their relationships is a powerful tool for students to use when taking notes as well as for teachers to use in classroom instruction, where visual tools transform how ideas, knowledge, dialogue, and meaning are created, communicated, and assessed. Graphic organizers help students organize, comprehend, and synthesize information.

There are a variety of visual tools and organizers available, and many terms to describe them. Terms that are used synonymously include webs, mindmaps, spider maps, clusters, semantic maps, concept maps, cognitive maps, and graphic organizers. This discussion will refer to graphic organizers as the inclusive term for a variety

Graphic Organizers

"A good graphic representation can show at a glance the key parts of a whole and their relations thereby allowing a holistic understanding that words alone cannot convey."

- Beau Fly Jones, Jean Pierce,
and Barbara Hunter -

"It's not at all surprising to find five hundred or more graphic aids in a single expository textbook. These graphics are there for a reason. They represent more than icing on the cake. The fact is that graphic materials enhance understanding and interpretation."

- Vacca and Vacca -

Purposes of Graphic Organizers

of visual tools. John Clarke in *Patterns of Thinking* (1991, p. 30) defines graphic organizers as: "[Words] on paper, arranged to represent an individual's understanding of the relationship between words. Whereas conventions of sentence structure make most writing linear in form, graphic organizers take their form from the presumed structure of relationships among ideas." Teachers and students use these visual tools to construct content knowledge and reflect individual thinking from information.

A common example of a graphic organizer is a calendar. The calendar provides a structure for recording information and ideas. It assists us in our everyday activities to gather, sift, sort, and share information. Daily events and activities become visual when they are recorded in a calendar.

Graphic organizers help students:

- learn and express ideas
- identify and isolate important information
- organize information into a meaningful structure
- integrate information and draw patterns and relationships
- clarify concepts that cannot be communicated well with words.

Graphic organizers help teachers:

- teach thinking skills
- reach visual learners
- provide stimuli for right-brain thinking.

Use of Graphic Organizers

The most common use of graphic organizers is for structured note-taking. As students listen, read, or view information, graphic organizers provide a means of capturing main ideas and drawing new ideas from associations.

Another common use is to draw out knowledge from the learner. When preparing essays, reports, or oral presentations and exhibitions, students use graphic organizers to focus and present their ideas. When engaged in guided reading and writing assignments, students use

graphic organizers to summarize and report information. Graphic organizers are an effective alternative to outlining when doing an overview of a chapter or unit of study.

Teachers find that graphic organizers enhance their lectures and demonstrations. Illustrations and explanations are easier to explain and understand when graphic organizers are used to illustrate information. Graphic organizers also strengthen bulletin board displays, murals, and multimedia presentations. The visual linkages assist students in understanding abstract concepts and are particularly helpful to students who have a limited vocabulary in organizing their thoughts before writing.

Graphic organizers are unique and meaningful to each author and vary by the types of information on which they are based. Graphic organizers can be categorized by the three ways they are used; describing, solving problems, and making meaning.

The following are several of the most common types of graphic organizers. They are shown and described in the Teacher Handbook.

"Give students worksheets and they will learn for today; teach students how to use a visual tool and they will learn for a lifetime."

- David Hyerle -

Types of Graphic Organizers

| Describing | Solving Problems | Making Meaning |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Brainstorming Web- Clustering Web- Character Web- Hierarchy- Continuum- Spider Map | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Affinity Diagram- Cause and Effect (Fishbone Map)- Media Plan- Decision Matrix | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Concept Map- Cycle (Flowchart)- KWL Chart- Interaction Outline- T-Graph- Venn Diagram |

Sample Lesson Plan

Note-taking

Title: Structured Note-taking

Grade Level/Subject: 9-12, All Subject Areas

Overview

Structured notes are graphic organizers that reflect the text structure, the author used, or the structure the reader inferred. Readers who generate structured notes use common text structures as organizing frameworks for their notes. They organize their notes around main ideas and the relationships of those main ideas to important details. This note-taking system contrasts with a simple listing of ideas in the order in which they appear in the reading.

Objective

As a result of these activities, students will be able to take notes and organize ideas more effectively from their content area reading materials; and thus, recall more accurately the information read.

Materials Needed

Blank templates of graphic organizers
Computer and graphic organizers computer software, if available
Content material for reading

Activities and Procedures

1. Discuss with students note-taking techniques and problems that they may encounter when taking notes. Point out that many students have trouble taking notes. It is difficult to decide what to include or how to organize notes.
2. Introduce one text structure strategy (begin with time/order) and show examples of that structure in simple, short passages of text from a content-area textbook. Select passages that clearly exemplify and signal the structure and point out the cue words and phrases that signal the structure. Other text structures include listing, compare/contrast, cause/effect, problem/solution.
3. Present a graphic organizer for that structure. Guide students by:
 - telling them how the organizer represents the structure pictorially
 - entering main ideas and details from the passage onto the organizer to complete it.

Explain that they soon will be creating their own notes in this form, not just filling in already existing notes.

4. Repeat the process with two more structures. Indicate the differences between structures. Guide students to:
 - identify these three structures in simple, clearly signaled, short prose arrangements

- draw graphic organizers
- enter main idea and detail phrases on them.

Provide feedback; encourage students to tell why they identified a segment as representing that structure and why they included particular information on the organizer.

5. Repeat Number 4 with remaining structures. Review all the structures and provide additional practice identifying the structure in passages in which the structure is merely implicit (e.g., without cues in introduction, headings, or transitions).
6. Use an explicitly structured passage of approximately five to ten paragraphs from a content-area textbook. Model the note-taking strategy using a read/think-aloud procedure (see number 7). Explain the purpose for reading the passage and scan it. Comment whenever the overall structure becomes evident. Use the structure to predict subsequent content and rectify misconceptions that arise as you encounter new information. Continuously scan ahead and back to check on ideas that support the structure. Create a structure-based graphic organizer, filling in the main idea and detail information, fleshing out the graphic summary by referring back to text, and adding pictorial cues to represent main ideas or important detail information. When filling in the organizer, paraphrase rather than using the text verbatim.
7. Provide one explicitly structured and one implicitly structured three-to-five paragraph expository passage. Ask students to pair up and practice the note-taking strategy using the read/think-aloud procedure, starting with the explicitly cued passage. One student reads the passage aloud and takes notes, describing his/her mental processes orally. The partner provides feedback and encouragement. Then students switch roles and work with the implicitly cued passage.
8. Introduce a full chapter of expository material that has explicitly cued, clear combinations of structures. It may be necessary to revise existing materials to have such a clean-cut example. Model the note-taking strategy using the read/think-aloud technique. Create a graphic organizer that encompasses the combinations of structures included in the chapter. Point out that there is no single correct form of organizer, but that the organizer that is developed should present the top-level structure as well as the other structures used in the passage.
9. Provide students with a chapter of explicitly cued and cleanly structured expository material that they have not encountered previously. In pairs, have them generate a graphic organizer. Collect and review the structured notes that they produce and choose two or three to discuss and evaluate in a subsequent lesson. In the discussion, provide feedback on selection of structures, page layout, and selection of main ideas and details included on the organizer. Next, have students complete a similar activity.
10. Model the read/think-aloud procedure using the note-taking strategy with implicitly structured and poorly organized materials. Show students alternative structures that might be used in creating graphic organizers and discuss how alternate structures emphasize different points. Have students practice the note-taking strategy with implicitly cued and poorly organized chapter-length material.

(Source: Smith, Pat, and Tompkins, Gail. "Structured Note-taking: A New Strategy for Content Area Readers." *Journal of Reading* (October 1988), pp. 46-53.)

Sample Lesson Plan

Graphic Organizers

Title: Genre Comparison

Grade Level/Subject: 9-10, English Language Arts

Overview

Literary genres are distinguished from one another by major differences in theme, plot, setting, style, characterization, etc. However, they also have some subtle commonalities. This activity focuses on the differences and similarities found in literary genres.

Objective

As a result of this activity, students will comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They will engage in literary analysis as they compare and contrast genres. Students will also complete successfully two graphic organizers – a brainstorming web and a compare and contrast map.

Materials Needed

Copies of blank brainstorming webs
Copies of blank compare and contrast map
Computers and graphic organizer software, if available

Activities and Procedures

1. With class input, make a list of the major literary genres.
2. Have the entire class brainstorm books or movies to represent each genre. Have students complete a brainstorming graphic organizer for each genre and its corresponding examples. Some works may fit into more than one category; encourage discussion and debate on this to further understanding of the genre.
3. Have students form interest groups based on their favorite genre and brainstorm using a brainstorming graphic organizer the key features of their genre.
4. Have students pair up with a student from a different genre group. For example, science fiction could pair with mystery. Have students in pairs create a compare and contrast map showing the similarities and differences between their genres.
5. Have students post their compare and contrast maps and then have the class do a walk-around to read the various diagrams and learn the similarities and differences depicted. Follow with a class discussion on students' observations and findings.
6. Finally, discuss the similarities among the genres and develop a generic list of guidelines for fiction. Then develop specific definitions for each genre.

(Source: Chase, Mary, Ph.D., *Meeting Standards with Inspiration*. Inspiration Software, Inc., 1999, pp. 26-27.)

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Graphic Organizers

<http://www.wm.edu/TTAC/articles/learning/graphic.htm>

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<http://www.unl.edu/teaching/notetakingtips.html>

Note-taking and In-class Skills. Virginia Tech.

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